

# Ladies responsible for funding: MP

The Ladies of the Lake and the now famous nude calendar, followed by their Naked Truth Citizens Action Plan to save Lake Simcoe were "the tipping point" that led to the federal government grant of \$12 million, Simcoe North MP Bruce Stanton told the Ladies at a meeting Saturday.

Mr. Stanton predicted "this is just the start of it".

That was music to the ears of Virginia Hackson, chairperson of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

Ms Hackson, echoing Georgina Mayor Rob Grossi, said she hopes the \$12 million will become an annual grant.

The response of the federal government, along with the successful passage of a Lake Simcoe protection resolution by Simcoe North MPP Garfield Dunlop, heralds in a new reality in politics at all levels, she said.

The new power wielded by groups such as the Ladies of the Lake and Rescue Lake Simcoe

Coalition, will make provincial and federal candidates ignore environmental issues at their peril, Dr. Rick Smith told the audience.

Mr. Smith, the executive director of Environmental Defence, said polls taken in Simcoe County express widespread support for Lake Simcoe environmental issues.

There is also deep concern over the anticipated intensification of development in the county that is not protected by the provincial Greenbelt policy — unlike areas on the east side of the lake.

Campaign Lake Simcoe, a joint initiative of the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, Environmental Defence and Ontario Nature, has taken the cause of the lake into the halls of Queen's Park, he said.

Protecting Lake Simcoe has now become a priority for a wide-ranging alliance of environmental groups across the province, he said.

The support is significant enough to enable a strong push to have candidates for office in the Oct. 10 provincial election declare their support for a Lake Simcoe Act or face the wrath of voters.

That act would include sustained annual funding, such as is now enjoyed by the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine.

That new coalition of environmental groups is coming together for the first time at a Lake Simcoe Summit, tentatively set for June 18 at the South Shore Community Centre in Barrie, Mr. Smith said.

"The goal of the summit would be to build consensus around the principles in the Act" and then demand politicians running for office support it, he said.

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For more information, go to campaign [lakesimcoe.ca](http://lakesimcoe.ca) or [www.lakeladies.ca](http://www.lakeladies.ca)